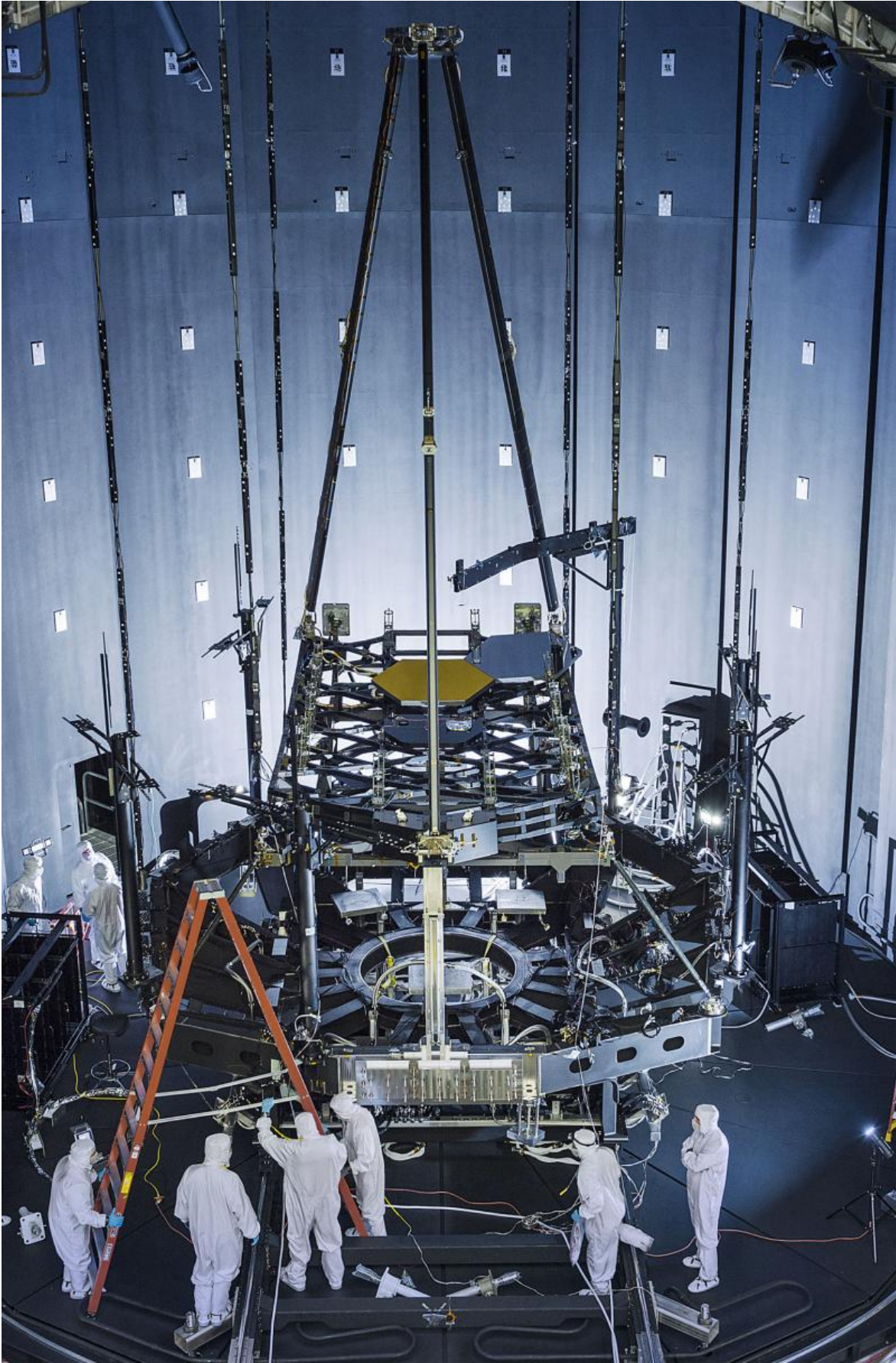


Image: Inside NASA's giant vacuum chamber with the James Webb Space Telescope's Pathfinder backplane test model

April 24 2015, by Laura Betz



Credit: NASA/Chris Gunn

Inside NASA's giant thermal vacuum chamber, called Chamber A, at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, the James Webb Space Telescope's Pathfinder backplane test model, is being prepared for its cryogenic test. Previously used for manned spaceflight missions, this historic chamber is now filled with engineers and technicians preparing for a crucial test.

Exelis developed and installed the optical test equipment in the chamber.

"The optical test equipment was developed and installed in the chamber by Exelis," said Thomas Scorse, Exelis JWST Program Manager. "The Pathfinder telescope gives us our first opportunity for an end-to-end checkout of our equipment."

"This will be the first time on the program that we will be aligning two primary mirror segments together," said Lee Feinberg, NASA Optical Telescope Element Manager. "In the past, we have always tested one mirror at a time but this time we will use a single test system and align both mirrors to it as though they are a single monolithic mirror."

The James Webb Space Telescope is the scientific successor to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. It will be the most powerful space telescope ever built. Webb is an international project led by NASA with its partners, the European Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency.

Provided by NASA

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